

The Party Takes Disney Miniseries by luxuriousvoyage11

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Summary:

In honor of Disney's 15th anniversary, and surviving their first year of high school, Mike, El, Lucas, Max, Dustin, and Will fly down to Orlando, Florida to spend a week at the (rumored) happiest place on Earth.

1. Guess we're going to Disney

Six months - that's how long Hopper was harassed hourly by his adopted daughter about going to Disney World. As far as he was concerned, he had heard the term enough to complete ban it from the English language.

It all started when El had made a quiet, mousy friend in the beginning of the school year. Melissa Allen had just moved to Indiana from Florida and was sitting alone eating her lunch in the library when El had passed through during her study hall. She took one look at the girl before quietly walking over and giving her a shy smile.

It didn't take long for her to notice eating alone was not considered normal, but actually quite sad. She felt grateful to have her five best friends at lunch to talk and laugh with and couldn't let the small brunette be deprived of that.

Soon enough, it became a routine and the girls spent the entire 45 minutes getting to know one another. Melissa's parent's had moved a few miles outside of Hawkins to stay with her sick grandmother, thus uprooting her life in the sunshine state.

"Yeah, and it really sucks because I lived like an hour away from Disney World and now there's really nothing to do here."

El had completely fallen in love with Disney movies, one of her favorites was Peter Pan, but she had never heard of Disney World. The girl had noticed El's confused face and dramatically put her hand over her heart, "have you never heard of Disney World?!"

This only prompted her to bring in and share the many photos and stories from her trips there. El browsed and listened in fascination and felt her heart swell at this magical place, in disbelief that no one in her life had informed her of it.

The petite girl had barged into her new residence to see Hopper slouched over at the dining room table, overlooking papers. "Hey, kid," he said, not looking up to see his daughter's outraged expression.

She stomped over and shot an accusatory finger at him, "why have you not told me about Disney World?"

And that's how it went until about March when Hopper couldn't take any more of the begging and pleading. He was able to put her off by promising, "if all your grades are good at the end of the year, we'll all go there to celebrate okay?"

He knew she was going to have a report card full of As, so he and Joyce secretly started planning, asking all of the moms and eventually getting the okay to book the flights and rooms.

Spring came and went and soon enough, finals were over and every teen in Hawkins was dumping their books and out exploring on their bikes. El had presented her grades proudly, all As and a B which she hung on the refrigerator next to a note that just simply read, "Disney?"

Hopper let out a cackle and, two weeks later, allowed El to invite her friends over for a movie night. While they all sat down for dinner, Hopper cleared his throat. "By the way, you're all going to Disney next week."

Everyone sat around and stared at each other in silence before erupting into cheers, El running over and giving Hopper the warmest hug he'd ever received. "Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

Had he known he'd get the biggest headache of his life by sitting in a crowded airport with six 15-year-olds, he would've driven down by himself.

"Dustin, you would 100% be Dopey, I don't even know why you're fighting us on this."

"You guys are a bunch of assholes, I'm Happy and you damn well know it!"

You'd think to pick something as childish as which of the seven dwarfs you are would be a good time but, no, the bickering just hadn't stopped. Joyce giggled quietly as she saw the distressed chief rubbing his temples.

"Looks like you'd be Grumpy," she mumbles, causing him to side-eye her while fighting back a smile.

Their relationship teetered the fine line between friends and lovers; and while nothing physical ever happened, they definitely didn't consider themselves to be just friends. He had helped her grieve the death of Bob and slowly, but surely, she had healed with his patience and helpfulness.

The more he came around, the longer she wanted him to stay and the more their longing looks grew. Anyone could see it was just a matter of time before the two got together.

"The boarding process for Flight 651 to Orlando will begin shortly," the booming voice interrupted.

'Thank God,' Hopper thinks, grateful for the few rows of seats he left between him and the cheering teens.

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All of the kids had been on an airplane before - besides, Eleven. Mike had explained to her the machine will fly over 30,000 feet in the air, making the trip only two hours. Mike sat between Will and El, who had requested the window seat, while Max, Lucas, and Dustin were in the row next to them. El had noticed her boyfriend was more jittery than usual, giving him questioning looks that he only shook off and reassured with a smile.

After everyone was buckled in, El felt the plane just slowly move for a few minutes before coming to a stop and then pick up immense speed. The loud noises scared her more than anything else, but then she looked out the window in fascination as she saw they were actually off the ground.

She looked at Mike with a huge smile only to see his eyes closed and his hand clamped around his armrest. Her face dropped at her boyfriend's obvious fear and she gently grabbed his hand, squeezing it reassuringly. One of his eyes popped open and he looked at El, giving her a small smile.

"Sorry, my hand is sweaty," he mumbles, causing her to let out a giggle.

"That's okay," she says before leaning on his shoulder and looking out the window.

Mike slowly felt himself relax, his girlfriend's closeness and the plane leveling off calming his tense body. El must've felt it because she removed herself from his shoulder and smiled, "are you okay?"

Mike nodded, "yeah, sorry El," he said, somewhat embarrassed, "I've always been scared of flying."

She nods, understandingly. She probably would be too if she wasn't so fascinated by the sky and the clouds. It was a sight she was robbed of for 12 years so being able to be up there was surreal for her.

Will had brought some puzzle books and Sudoku, the two hours passing by quickly and, before they knew it, they were picking up the rental car at Orlando International Airport.

"Wow, Hop, you're so domestic with your minivan," Dustin teases, causing everyone including Joyce to giggle.

"We should've left you at home, Dopey," the chief says, causing everyone to let out surprised "oh's!"

"Grumpy 1, Dopey 0," El said, sticking her tongue out at both the boys.

Dustin lets out a defeated sigh and hurries into the backseat, joined by Will and Mike. Max sat in between Lucas and El, excitedly talking to the latter about their favorite Disney movies.

El was pleasantly surprised when she discovered the tough, skater girl's secret pleasure was Disney movies. Her preference was Alice in Wonderland, but Peter Pan was a close second.

"Do you think there's a Neverland ride?" El screeched, bouncing up and down in her seat.

Mike watched from the back with a smile, never seeing El this excited

and childlike about anything. He had been to Disney a few years after Holly was born and, while he had a fun time, didn't exactly feel the need to come back. Now, though, he thinks he was willing to go back every year if it meant his girlfriend being this happy.

"Chill with the heart eyes," Dustin whispered next to his friend.

Mike rolled his eyes and poked his friend's side, "shut up, Dopey."

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It was around dinnertime when the group of eight finally had made it to their double rooms at Disney's Contemporary Resort. The rooms were medium-sized, each occupied by two floral patterned double beds with a bathroom next to the entrance. A double door connected the two, sleeping arrangements still up in the air.

"So, me and Mike share a bed, right Hop?" El asked with a smirk; she really had mastered the snarky, teenage phase.

He put his hands on his face, squeezing the bridge of his nose. Joyce fought back her laughter at the exchange, giving El her best reprimanding mom face.

"How 'bout you and Max and me and Will?" she says before a blush crosses her face.

A 15-year-old sharing a bed with his mom in front of all his friends could be embarrassing and, as she's about to blurt out a different idea, she sees Will nod and smile at her.

"That's good with me," he says softly, "so which one of you is gonna sleep with the chief?" he asked, his voice laced with humor as he faced his three friends.

"Well, him and Dustin both snore so technically, they should be together," Lucas says aloud. Hopper gives him a questioning look and he adds on, "El always talks about how dreadfully loud you are, she can hear you from her room!"

El shrugs innocently and then a loud growling stomach fills the room.

"When are we gonna eat something!"

~

The Terrace Cafe is a buffet style restaurant on the main level of the hotel, much to the excitement of the four growing boys. They had already gotten up for thirds while the girls and parents shook their heads at the clumsy teens hobbling over one another at the buffet station.

"They're so ridiculous," Max says shaking her head, "it should've just been us four."

El let out a giggle and pushed her arm lightly, "but then you wouldn't see your stalker," she says playfully.

Apologizing to Max a month after the Snowball was a moment she'd never forget. Not because of how wrong she had been in the assumption that Max was trying to "steal" Mike from her or how obvious it was that Lucas and Max were slowly becoming a couple, but because of how forgiving she was.

She just kind of laughed it off and reassured her that it was okay and she still wanted to be friends, making El feel ten times worse.

Mike had explained to her how unfairly he had treated Max from the moment he met her, he too, apologizing that night in his basement.

The redhead understood, though, why he was so miserable. She saw it in the way Mike's eyes softened every time El came into a room or how tightly she held onto him while they were holding hands or watching a movie.

They had all gone through a lot and were grateful everything was behind them now, relishing in the strong bond they all created.

"Shut up," she mumbled with a roll of the eyes just as the boys sat down.

They all went back up into the room at around 9, needing to rest from their day of travel and for their early start at Magic Kingdom.

Hopper watched El say night to the boys and kiss Mike's cheek before walking over to sit next to him on the bed.

"What do you want?" he asked, his playful tone making her smile.

"Thank you again," she said softly, "I'm so happy to be here."

His heart soars and he really thought he was about to start crying. He swallowed the lump in his throat and pulled her into him, kissing the top of her head. "You deserve it, kid," he said against her head.

She pulled back and smiled up at him, "see you at seven a.m.!"

2. Day One, Part 1

I thought for sure she was kidding,” Hopper whined to Joyce on their way down to the lobby for breakfast at 7:45 a.m. The parents watched as the six kids happily ran down the hall to the elevators, Lucas and Will racing down to finally solve who is the fastest once and for all.

“You know the girl’s been waiting forever,” she points out sweetly before a yawn erupts from her. In all honesty, the mother herself has been waiting forever to go to Disney. It had opened a few years after she had graduated high school, only the few Hawkins residence wealthy enough to afford the air fare and hotel coming back boasting about the theme park.

So when Hopper had whispered the idea to her in her kitchen, the shared cigarette between them burning in the ashtray, she had agreed almost immediately. Not only for herself, and her silent urge to see just how happy the happiest place on Earth was, but for Will, Eleven, the rest of the kids, and the quality time with Hopper certainly didn’t hurt.

“I know, the kid earned it too. Wheeler was over all the time and they didn’t hug every 3 seconds like they usually do,” Hop recalls, humor in his tone, “their noses were in the books till dinner.” Joyce smiles sweetly at the thought, the two adults interrupted by shouts from Lucas.

“I knew I was the fastest!” he exclaims, “take that Byers!”

“You were only the fastest because you didn’t race me,” Mike says, wanting to get a rise out of his competitive friend; he would trip over his lanky legs within the first two seconds.

“Yeah, same goes for me!” Dustin says cheekily, meaning every word.

“Oh, now, that’s the saddest shit I’ve ever heard, Dustin. Look at my physique,” he says, dramatically posing to flex his skinny but slightly toned arm.

Before Dustin can make a smart comment back, Max just raises an eyebrow at the flexing boy. "What's with the face, Maxine?" Lucas asks when he notices, a smirk crossing his face at the use of her full name.

"Oh, now I'm really gonna beat you in our race, stalker." El can only smirk at the two, loving that neither of them notice the look in their eyes when they "fight" or how when the other isn't looking, a sweet fondness will glow in them.

Their kiss at the Snowball was hardly mentioned again, like that night was the only night they allowed themselves to be vulnerable with each other. Monday came and it was back to school where they joked and competed with one another, Max's tough exterior back with a vengeance.

El had asked her about it at one of their sleepovers, why she doesn't bring it up to Lucas. "He never said anything so he obviously just wants to forget about it," Max said quietly, her body language defensive and tensed.

"Why would he wanna for-"

"Can we please not talk about it, El," Max said, feeling silly and knowing El can't relate since her relationship is abnormally perfect, "it's just something we should all forget."

She hasn't though, of course, and neither has he; but it's just something the independent kids aren't able to face yet.

~

The walk to Magic Kingdom was only 10 minutes so right after breakfast, the group of eight left the hotel doors and followed the directions given to them by the front desk. It already seemed like the longest walk of Hopper's life and they'd only been outside for three minutes - even his own daughter was giving him a headache.

"Oh, my god!" El screeched, hitting her boyfriend's arm as she reads over the Disney pamphlet, "Peter Pan's Flight! That's our first ride! Please, please, please!"

Mike's eyes crinkled as he laughed at her excitement and he grabbed her hand that was flying around as she flailed up and down, "fine you crazy woman!"

"Girl, Mike," Hopper's deep voice interrupts, "she is a girl."

Joyce lets out a snort next to him while El just rolls her eyes, pulling Mike by the hand to catch up with their friends.

"Guys! They do have a Peter Pan ride!"

A few feet back, Joyce is shooting her burly friend a stern look. "Oh c'mon, Joyce, fifteen is NOT a woman!" he says defensively, already knowing that's why she's giving him the hairy eye.

"Oh no? But I'm sure you were doing manly things by fifteen yourself, Hop. And these kids are much better than we were."

It only nags at her slightly that she met Lonnie when she was fifteen. She shakes her head, hoping that will rid the unpleasant memory plaguing her mind.

They watch the kids as they laugh and smile and shove one another good-naturedly, the sign for Magic Kingdom up ahead increasing their endorphins. Mike and El share a smile about something he whispered in her ear, his arm slinging over her shoulder, hers around his waist. The action looks too natural for the two fifteen-year-olds, causing Hopper to let out a quiet groan.

"Fifteen is not a woman," he repeats with a grumble, looking down at Joyce. She lets out a sigh, nudging him unsuccessfully and he can't help but smirk. "Though I have to say....for a woman, you're about the size of a fifteen-year-old."

The shock on her face is laughable, eyes wide and mouth hanging open. "That is it! You can walk alone, Grumpy!" She attempted to speed walk ahead of him, his hand softly gripping her arm to halt her.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I couldn't help myself," he says, the shit-eating grin on his face looking anything but apologetic. She narrows her eyes at him slightly before bursting into laughter when she realizes

she really is craning her neck up so high.

“Oh, whatever Hop!”

They're in front of the Magic Kingdom entrance shortly after Hopper's third apology, the line at the front booth short since the park had just opened five minutes ago. They all purchase a 3-day pass for Magic Kingdom, Joyce feeling grateful she worked so much overtime at Melvard's over the past four months. Will had smiled at her before running through the entrance with Max right next to him, “thank you, mom!”

He knew how hard his mom worked and now realized why she had been taking all of those late night shifts. Her heart swelled at his gratitude and she choked out a “you're welcome, Will.”

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The morning consisted of pure chaos. True to the schedule, they waited on the hour-long line for Peter Pan's Flight and El was not at all disappointed. She watched in fascination, her head moving from left to right as she tried to catch every magnificent detail of the ride. She had requested to go on once a day, causing everyone to laugh when, really, they wanted to groan. No one had the heart to tell her how boring it was.

With no more requests for rides, choosing was free range and the group was running back and forth, trying to avoid the longest lines but also trying to decipher the coolest ones to go on; Dumbo, despite its simplicity, was everyone's favorite thus far.

“I think I can relate to Dumbo,” Dustin had commented, causing everyone, even Hopper, to burst out into laughter.

“Really? Is it because of your wits?” Will teased playfully.

Joyce loved to see her son having fun and so full of life, it made her smile just a little bit brighter. By 1:00, pleas of getting lunch were uttered from one kid in particular and they decided to go back to the hotel to eat.

“It's cheaper,” Lucas impersonates in his buffet seat twenty minutes

later, “they’ve gotten enough of our money!”

Everyone but the chief cackles, the tone of voice and grouchy facial expression spot on. “Sorry, kid, don’t you have a 4th plate to get?” he says back sarcastically.

“Actually, that’s me!” Dustin says, “let’s go, Maxine!”

The two kids run frantically to the buffet line, the redhead laughing when Dustin trips over his untied shoe-lace causing his plate full of scraps to land on the floor.

“What a mess,” Mike mumbles, cause El to smile and chastise him playfully.

“Be nice!”

The same could be said to the darker boy next to her, his eyes in slits as he watches Max take Dustin’s hand to help him up. El looks up at her boyfriend in annoyance, her eyes moving to their two friends at the buffet line to Lucas.

The couple has mastered talking without words, conveying all they need with their faces. It helps in moments like this, but they’ll usually use it when plotting a white lie to allow El to stay at his house a little longer or attempting to escape a party hangout session to watch a movie in peace.

Lucas’s jealous look is gone by the time Max and Dustin plop down at the table again, Joyce ushering the kids to finish up so they can get back to the park. Before they get up, El pointedly looks at her best friend mouthing the words “need to talk later.”

And talk they do, two hours later when they’re seated waiting for their cart to move on Snow White’s Adventure. Max lets out a giant yawn causing El to giggle softly. “You’re Sleepy!”

The redhead rolls her eyes playfully at her childish friend, “and you’re Bashful!” she says back before raising her voice one pitch higher, “oh my gosh, Mikey, stop it! You’re SO funny and cute!”

El narrows her eyes playfully, nudging her friend, “I don’t call him

Mikey!”

The two girls laugh before El sobers, looking around at the animal figurines, the ride a whole lot creepier than she imagined.

“So,” Max says, happily distracting El, “what’d you want to talk about before? Secretly,” she asks, whispering the last word.

“Promise not to get mad?”

Max does everything in her power not to roll her eyes, damn Mike for teaching her about promises.

“Sure, El, I promise.”

El then relays the incident from lunch, explaining Lucas’s jealousy when she was smiling with Dustin.

“He didn’t look angry, just kind of upset...like he wanted to be up there with...”

“You’re too much of a romantic El,” Max interrupts her friend, “it definitely wasn’t like that. Not everything has to be so rainbows and sunshine.”

El lets out a sigh, her eyes drifting behind the redhead to a darkened cottage. It almost reminds her of a friendlier, Disney-esque version of the lab. It’s cute and small and looks like a normal cottage but has a darkness around it that unnerves her. The lights, or lack thereof, mixed with the sounds of a loud booming voice want her off this ride immediately.

Max is all too aware of her friend’s sudden quietness and feels her heart drop, thinking she’s upset her.

“It’s not bad that you’re a romantic, El, it’s actually really cool considering all the crazy shit’s that happened to you...but I just don’t me and Lucas would be like that, even if I wanted to be,” she says, trailing off when she gets to the last of her sentence.

When El is still silent after a few moments, she looks over to see her friend stiff and pale.

“Oh god,” Max mumbles, finally noticing the creepy vibe of what seemed like a cute Princess-themed ride. “Are you okay, El? The ride should be done soon.”

Max cautiously puts her arm around El, the brunette relaxing slightly against her friend. “Stupid dark ride,” she mumbles, annoyed at her reaction.

It’s mostly with the dark that El’s trauma will resurface. It’s not something she’s particularly embarrassed about, she just feels extremely vulnerable and setback when it does happen. Max sees the bars separating the aisles and ride and assures her friend the ride is over, El rushing off and out the exit into the sunlight the second the ride stops.

Mike is smiling about something Will said when he sees his girlfriend’s brown hair rush by him in a flash.

“What happened?” he asks hurriedly to Max to which she just shrugs.

“Think the darkness freaked her out,” she says, Mike pushing out the exit before his friend even finishes the sentences.

She then looks towards Will, whose face is etched in concern, “are you okay, Will?” she asks, kindly.

He smiles back brightly, linking his arm with hers. “Sure am! Let’s go check on our girl.”